

United States Courts
Southern District of Texas
FILED

APR 28 2022 VC

Nathan Ochsner, Clerk
Laredo Division

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

LAREDO DIVISION

UNIT UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

ARTURO MATA, JR.
Defendant.

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CRIMINAL NO. 5:21-cr-00954-05

FACTUAL STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PLEA AGREEMENT

The United States of America, by and through Jennifer B. Lowery, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas and Jennifer L. Day, Assistant United States Attorney, and the defendant, ARTURO MATA, JR. and the defendant's counsel, hereby stipulate as follows:

I.

If this case proceeded to trial, the United States of America would prove each element of the offense beyond a reasonable doubt. The following facts, among others, would be offered to establish the Defendant's guilt:

II.

During May and June of 2020, an undercover special agent ("UC") with the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA") and a confidential source had telephonic conversations with Sealed Co-Defendant #1 and Sealed Co-Defendant #2. Sealed Co-Defendants #1 and #2 advised the UC and the CS that they were interested in purchasing weapons on behalf of Cartel del Noreste ("CDN"), a Mexican drug trafficking organization. The goal was for the weapons to be purchased in the United States and then smuggled into Mexico for use by CDN. The weapons to be purchased included the following:

- M60 machine guns
- FN Minimi machine guns
- RS-556 rifles
- M-16 rifles
- 50 caliber rifles
- rocket propelled launchers
- M-67 grenades
- pineapple grenades

Sealed Co-Defendant #2 and the UC agreed upon a final purchase price of \$500,000 USD.

Sealed Co-Defendant #2 told the UC that he would inform his boss and that they would start sending the money “over there” (to the United States from Mexico) right away. Sealed Co-Defendant #2 advised the UC that the weapons would not be used in Nuevo Laredo, but sent to other cities in Mexico, where there was “active war.” Sealed Co-Defendant #2 and the UC agreed to exchange the weapons on June 19, 2020 in Laredo, Texas. Sealed Co-Defendant #2 advised that he would be sending someone from Mexico named “Manuel” with the money.

“Manuel” (later identified as Manuel Amador Perez-Ortiz) contacted the UC by phone on June 19, 2020 on behalf of Sealed Co-Defendant #2. Perez-Ortiz and the UC discussed the weapons, and how the money exchange would occur. Perez-Ortiz agreed to meet the UC at the H-E-B grocery store on Saunders Avenue in Laredo, Texas.

On June 19, 2020, at approximately 1:00 p.m., Perez-Ortiz arrived in the H-E-B parking lot in a white Jeep Cherokee, which was being driven by Luis Ramos. The Jeep parked next to the UC’s vehicle. Perez-Ortiz exited, and met with the UC. The UC asked Perez-Ortiz where the money was. Perez-Ortiz stated that he wanted to see the weapons first. The UC advised Perez-Ortiz that the weapons were located at a warehouse. Perez-Ortiz stated he was going to park nearby and get back with the UC. Perez-Ortiz re-entered the Jeep and Ramos drove him to another location in the parking lot.

Perez-Ortiz exited the white Jeep and entered a black Land Rover. He then exited the Land Rover with a brown box in his hand. Perez-Ortiz then entered a gold Ford Explorer, which was being driven by **Arturo Mata, Jr.** **Mata** drove Perez-Ortiz back to meet with the UC again. Perez-Ortiz then showed the UC, in the presence of **Mata**, the \$500,000 USD in cash. The UC and Perez-Ortiz discussed the weapons, and how Perez-Ortiz needed to follow the UC back to the warehouse to obtain them.

Mata then drove Perez-Ortiz to another location in the H-E-B parking lot. Perez-Ortiz exited the gold Explorer, carrying the box of currency. Perez-Ortiz re-entered the passenger side of the white Jeep and all vehicles departed the H-E-B.

A Laredo Police Department (LPD) Officer initiated a traffic stop on the white Jeep for an obstructed tag. The Jeep pulled over into the parking lot of McCoy's Building Supplies on Saunders Avenue. Luis Ramos was identified as the driver and Manuel Perez-Ortiz was identified as the passenger. Inside the vehicle, officers located a cardboard box, containing \$500,000 USD. Officers also recovered a loaded .40 caliber firearm in Perez-Ortiz's waistband.

Agents then observed **Arturo Mata, Jr.** enter the parking lot of McCoy's Building supplies. **Mata** exited his vehicle and went in and out of the store several times while observing what was happening with the traffic stop of the white Jeep. **Mata** then re-entered the gold Ford Explorer and drove away.

Perez-Ortiz was arrested on June 19, 2021 for Possession of a Firearm by a Prohibited Person. He was placed in an LPD patrol car with Luis Ramos. Ramos told Perez-Ortiz to tell officers that they had \$500,000 in cash because they were looking for a piece of land to build a house. Ramos also told Perez-Ortiz to tell officers that the money came from the sale of a ranch in


Mexico. Both Perez-Ortiz and Ramos agreed to stick with these stories when interviewed by law enforcement.

After rights advisement and waiver, Perez-Ortiz told police that he lived in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico. He stated that he was a construction worker there, and that he had crossed the river illegally on June 18, 2020, near the railroad bridge in downtown Laredo, to avoid having to declare the money to U.S. Customs Officers. Perez-Ortiz stated that he found the firearm and kept it with him for safety since he had crossed with \$500,000 USD through the river. He stated that he had waited over 24 hours at the riverbanks to be picked up by his friend, Luis Ramos.

Arturo Mata was arrested on May 26, 2021. After rights advisement and waiver, he admitted that he had been hired to act as a “look out” on June 19, 2020. **Mata** said that his job was to ensure that they were not being looked at by law enforcement during the currency exchange. **Mata** stated that he was expecting to be paid \$100 USD. **Mata** admitted to driving Perez-Ortiz in his vehicle (the Gold Explorer) to meet with the UC. **Mata** also stated that he had been instructed to report whether Perez-Ortiz and Ramos were arrested after the traffic stop.

III.

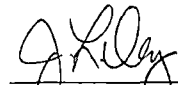
Defendant, **ARTURO MATA, JR.**, hereby confesses and judicially admits that between May 12, 2020 and June 19, 2020, he knowingly **conspired to commit international money laundering**, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(h) and 1956(a)(2)(A).


ARTURO MATA, JR.
Defendant

APPROVED:

JENNIFER B. LOWERY
ACTING UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

By:



JENNIFER L. DAY
Assistant United States Attorney
Southern District of Texas
Telephone: (956) 723-6523
Email: Jennifer.day@usdoj.gov



JOHN PAUL

Attorney for Defendant